

The Library Assistant:

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DECEMBER MEETING.—ANNOUNCEMENT.

The next meeting of the Association will be held at the Central Public Library, Hornsey, N., on **Wednesday evening, December 6th**, by invitation of Thomas Johnston, Esq., Chief Librarian. Light refreshments (which Mr. Johnston has kindly undertaken to provide) will be served at 6.30 precisely, and an opportunity will be afforded of viewing the various departments of the Library. Members may confidently look forward to another enjoyable and profitable evening, and it is hoped the attendance at the last meeting—good as it was—will be exceeded. The papers to be read and discussed are as follows:—

7.30. **Junior paper: Archibald Hatcher**, *Public Library, Stratford, West Ham*. "Stocktaking Methods."

8.15. **Senior paper: J. G. Faraday**, *Sub-Librarian, Hornsey*. "Weeding out."

Opener: **Evan G. Rees**, *Public Library, Great Smith Street, W.*

The Library is easily accessible from all parts, as will be seen from the particulars set out below. The quickest and most direct way is to book to Hornsey from either of the following (or intermediate) stations:—

Moorgate Street, 5.47, 5.53, 5.59, 6.5, 6.12, 6.18, 6.28.

King's Cross, 5.40, 5.49, 5.55, 6.2, 6.12, 6.18, 6.25.

Broad Street, 5.41, 5.55, 6.3, 6.10, 6.20, 6.27.

Victoria (through), 5.40, 5.47, 6.2.

Woolwich (through, change at Finsbury Park), 5.13.

G.N. Electric trains from Moorgate Street and Old Street to Finsbury Park every three minutes. Passengers by this line may book through to Hornsey, but must change at Finsbury Park. The South London Electric Railway and the Shepherd's Bush line run in conjunction with the G.N. Electric Railway, and passengers may book through to Hornsey from any of the stations on these two lines. *Members are warned against journeying by omnibus to Hornsey Rise, as this is some 25 minutes' walk from the Library.* The Library is situated in Tottenham Lane, Hornsey.

NOVEMBER MEETING.

The second meeting of the Session was held at the Public Library, Stoke Newington, N., on Wednesday, November 15th, and again a brilliant success has to be recorded. The attendance was most gratifying, a pleasing feature being the presence of a large number of ladies.

The members were received by the Mayor of Stoke Newington, Alderman W. H. Savery, J.P., wearing his chain of office, and by Alderman William Eve, Chairman of the Libraries Committee. Mr. Geo. Preece (Librarian) was also present, and to his untiring efforts to ensure the comfort of members must be attributed much of the success of the evening. In this he was ably seconded by Mr. B. J. Harper (Sub-Librarian).

Those present were first regaled with light refreshments, kindly provided by Mr. Alderman Eve, this function being presided over by the Mayor. At the meeting proper, which commenced at 7.30, the Chair was taken by Mr. Alderman Eve, who, by his jovial personality imparted to the meeting a feeling of ease, and freedom from restraint and formality, with the result that the debate was vigorously sustained.

The first business was the election of a member to fill a vacancy on the London Committee. There were two nominations, and the voting resulted as follows:—Mr. G. A. Stephen (Bishopsgate Institute) 25 votes, Mr. E. Fletcher (Mile End) 10 votes. Mr. Stephen was therefore declared elected.

The junior paper for the evening was then read. This is a new feature, and one intended to give the junior members of the Association a more personal interest in the meetings. Judging by Mr. Bayley's paper, which was listened to with interest by seniors and juniors alike, the experiment should prove entirely successful. True, greater advantage might have been taken of the opportunity for discussion, but an improvement in this respect may safely be looked for. The paper was as follows:—

COUNTER WORK.

By D. J. BAYLEY, Bromley Library, Poplar, E.

Preliminaries and contact with the borrower. Granted that the person has no ticket, the first dealings with him concern his enrolment as a member. Having ascertained that he or she is eligible to borrow under the rules, a voucher is issued. When receiving a voucher filled in, one must note that it is correct and in a clean condition. The "clean condition" should be strictly enforced, for if a voucher cannot be kept clean, there is a great possibility that the books will fare badly. Care should be taken that the prospective borrower is correctly informed as to when his ticket will be ready, so as to save him the annoyance of calling too soon. When the ticket is obtained the borrowing of books may be commenced, but to adequately supply the borrower's needs there must be guides for him. These are usually the Catalogue, Guides and Reading lists, "Courses for home reading," etc., and lastly, but not least, the assistant at the counter.

Knowledge required. The standard of knowledge required is increasing yearly, and suddenly some of our assistants will awaken to the fact that they have a great deal to do ere they are efficient. Once the rate limit is removed the Library service, from the point of view of remuneration, will be considered no mean occupation and men of greater capacity will offer their services readily, thereby making the competition more keen. Mr. Ogle in the "Library year book," 1897, gives a very good idea of what should be required of an assistant, but apart from the essential accomplishments which he names there are many other important qualifications. A good memory is of great value. It is pleasing and encouraging to a borrower to find that he may learn by a simple enquiry whether a certain book is in the library or not. The styles of modern and ancient authors should be studied, for one cannot satisfactorily help a borrower without a knowledge of this kind. A borrower fond of historical works, having read all the works of a certain author, may wish to continue reading works of other authors on that period of history. With a knowledge of this kind you may lead him on from one to another. Short articles of a miscellaneous character should also be noted, for such often prove of greater service than a long treatise on a subject. If assistants are not removed from one branch of work to another, they should, when they have learned their own duties, find out all they can of the work of their col-

leagues, so that at a time of necessity they may be able to fill another's place, perhaps temporarily, but later to their own benefit.

Tastes and requirements of borrowers. Many borrowers possess books on a pet subject, and when joining a library often wish to develop this particular kind of reading: to supply their needs is comparatively easy. When a borrower is commencing to read, having no favourite subject or author, a little discretion is needed in your judgment of his requirements. When asked, they will often tell you that they do not know what they would like, therefore one must tempt them. History, Travel, Literature, Biography, or Fiction may be suggested, and if the borrower selects Fiction, then you have to find some pleasing book from that section. Possibly one of the better subjects is chosen, then it should be your aim to find the most interesting and reliable work the library possesses upon the subject. Attention is most profitably given to the non-fiction reader, and no pains should be spared in providing for his needs. The electrician, engineer, nature student, or history reader, can each find many wants with which to tax the usefulness of the library to him. At an early date a Subject Index to miscellaneous articles not receiving an entry in the catalogue, should be made; its usefulness will quickly justify the labour expended upon its production.

Facilities to aid borrowers in their selection of books. To many our catalogues often prove a mystery, though this is often through lack of knowledge, or because it is too much trouble to read the short preface which accompanies most of our catalogues. Many by their attitude will give you to understand that they do not know how to use the catalogue. They are timid of asking for your help; we should therefore go to their aid without invitation, enduring as best we can an occasional rebuff. A list of authors of books suitable for male and female readers is very useful; a list showing on which period of history an author writes is also serviceable; while a list of books suitable for the season appears in most libraries. With the facilities mentioned and an intelligent assistant, the needs of every borrower should be adequately met.

Routine. Some important details are: that at the close of service the stamps should be cleaned and the pads brushed off and put away for the night. The catalogues require collecting, unless attached to their place. These should be examined and kept in good order, so that no one may have cause to complain of not knowing with certainty the book he requires. Fines have to be checked and collected from the other assistants by the senior, and the remaining issues recorded. In the morning the books returned on the previous day should be replaced on the shelves; the dates changed; and catalogues put out again for service. When an error is pointed out in a catalogue, or on a list, it will of course be rectified at once. Expired tickets have also to be watched for, and the borrowers given a fresh voucher to fill up.

Charging against borrowers. At a convenient time a record of the books issued is made, on the issue sheet, or in the issue book. The book number, its class, and the reader's ticket number are the entries made. With the Indicator system the reader's ticket number and date of issue are entered in the Indicator block. In the case of Card Charging the reader's ticket number with the date of issue are entered on the book-cards; these are then put in numerical sequence of the day's issue; unless some other method is in vogue. Double charge is sometimes made against borrowers. A ledger is used, in which the borrower's registered number is entered, while the columns on the sheet or book are numbered at the top, consecutively. Each borrower's ticket number in that column receives such number against the corresponding number in the ledger. Envelopes in a tray are also used, and the same procedure is applicable to that method as with the ledger. Some of the advantages of the ledger system are: Should a borrower lose account of the book he has borrowed, by

informing one of the authorities at the library, he may learn with what book he is charged. For this purpose his name and address are first required; his name is then referred to in the index of borrowers, and there will be found his registered number. This is then referred to in the ledger, and against it will be found the number of the column in the issue book where the last charge was made against the borrower. In the case of a ticket being lost, if it is in use at the library, the same method is applied. The most important object of the ledger system for double charging is, that when cases of infectious disease occur, the exact book which a borrower may have may be applied for with certainty and immediately. Having received the daily list of infectious diseases from the Medical Officer, the process is as follows: Each address is turned up in a special copy of the voters' register, in which the numbers of all tickets issued to that address are entered. A reference is then made to the ledger, and books are traced without the least difficulty. If no one borrows from an address appearing on the Fever list, it is marked, and in the event of a voucher coming to hand enquiry can be made. When a borrower has no book but is retaining his ticket, the date of the notification is entered against his number in the ledger, thus ensuring that he will be unable to obtain more than one book until the case is declared clear by the Medical Officer. When there are books out and a case is reported, a notice is immediately sent to the borrower to the effect that the Sanitary official has been instructed to call for and disinfect the book or books he has, and the Public Health Department is also notified. Many other instances prove the usefulness of this method, and only by working it can one fully appreciate it.

Fines. The subject of fines seems to be a very debatable one. The rate limit is brought in as one of the many reasons for the existence of fines. Many libraries, it appears, make excessive charges, so that they may add considerably to their incomes, but this is an injustice and certainly not an encouragement to borrowers. The general rate of fine, however, averages one penny per week over the time allowed for reading the book. This is not excessive, and there seems to be little likelihood of the fine being abolished. If no fine were charged books would be kept an exceptionally long time, and borrowers in some cases would impose upon the library authorities, they having little power beyond demanding the return of the book. The cost of posting a notice to the borrower when a book is overdue, to the effect that it must be returned, and the cost of the receipts book has to be covered. Trouble would certainly ensue if the borrower were expected to pay the amount entailed in writing to him. A moderate charge, therefore, seems to be the smoothest way out of the difficulty. Naturally enough, those who break the rules ought to forfeit in some way, otherwise it would be unfair to those who observe the rules. With the Indicator system fines are detected by the colours on the borrowers' tickets. With the Card Charging, however, when the day's issue is put in numerical sequence, the overdue books present themselves automatically.

Dealing with children. A deal of patience must be expended upon the juveniles, and care should be taken that before they have attended the library very long they know its object, so that when school days are over they may still wish to be borrowers. What a children's room should contain has been spoken of and written about by more experienced persons than myself. A few things, however, are worth noting. When a room has a large number of children in it, it would be absurd to expect that the notice "Silence is requested" will be faithfully observed, although a tactful assistant will know how to minimise the extent to which they will give their tongues freedom. Where juveniles have to obtain their books in the same department as the adults, there is, of course, need for a

stricter observance of their conduct. Cleanliness should be rigidly enforced, otherwise the pictures, catalogues and lists at their disposal will not be fair to look upon.

Personal habits and Courtesy. An assistant may habituate himself to whatever attire he pleases, but the assistant who dresses unostentatiously is more likely to command respect. Each quality which will prove helpful to the public should be acquired by an assistant. Patience and courtesy are demanded in a large degree at the counter. Dictatorial and abrupt speech must necessarily be suppressed. To some this proves no easy matter, as nature seems to have robbed them of the ability of being tactful and pleasant. If all garrulity is avoided, and only the necessary amount of words used, and those pleasantly, no borrower should have a just reason for complaint. Incivility and disorder on the part of the borrower sometimes occur, and then, the necessary attention should be given by the most authoritative person in charge. When it is merely a minor offence it is sometimes best left unnoticed. Accuracy and neat work are, of course, essential.

Assistants and their colleagues. Among the staff there should be a perfect understanding, and each should recognise that however pleasant a senior may condescend to be with his juniors, no insubordination should exist. Each should be willing to learn from another, junior from senior and occasionally vice versa. Sensible assistants know that authority must be exercised by seniors, but this need not be administered offensively. Being only a junior myself, I will conclude this subject by asking assistants, who have not done so, to read Mr. W. Berwick Sayers' paper on "Staff relations," in the "Library Assistant" for September, 1904.

Discussion.

Mr. A. F. Hatcher in opening the discussion said he was glad that the reader of the paper insisted upon the cleanliness of forms. If, however, very dirty forms were presented, the applicants might be given other forms, with the request that they be filled in and kept cleaner, and this without any sarcastic allusions to soap. He deprecated the insolent tone adopted by some assistants towards children. He could not understand why borrowers were kept waiting two or three days before a ticket was issued. There was no reason why the application form could not be checked and a book issued at once, simply notifying the number of the book taken on the form, to be properly charged when the ticket was ready. He thought the Dictionary Catalogue preferable to the Class Catalogue, owing to the difficulty of finding books in the latter. There were even some assistants who did not know where to look for books in a Class Catalogue. He was of the opinion that the fines charged by some libraries were excessive, and that the rule as to renewal and extension should be made very explicit. He objected to the attitude sometimes adopted by the senior members of the staff towards the juniors.

Mr. Perry could not agree that books returned by borrowers should be replaced on the shelves the following morning. He thought they should be put away as soon as possible after being returned, in order that borrowers might at once be able to obtain them, and also to facilitate the finding of the books by the staff. As to marking on the burgess roll the names of those who were borrowers in order that houses in which there were infectious diseases might be immediately traced, he thought this unnecessary, inasmuch as the Medical Officer of Health invariably notified the librarian of such cases.

Mr. Alderman Eve added a few remarks, in the course of which he said that the limitations of the rate had been mentioned. He might say that they at Stoke Newington had voted against the limitation being

removed, because it was felt that if power were given to increase the rate places which had not adopted the Act might be deterred from doing so.

Two senior papers were then read, one by Mr. James D. Stewart (Croydon Public Libraries), and one by Mr. Coutts which is printed below. We regret that owing to lack of space we are unable to print both papers this month. Mr. Stewart's subject was "School Libraries."

WORK AMONGST CHILDREN IN THE LIBRARY.

By HENRY T. COUTTS, Croydon Public Libraries.

Probably no department of public library activity has been more prominent in recent years—particularly in America—than that of the work amongst children. It is advisable that our thoughts should be directed to the importance of this phase of our work, for generally speaking it has not in the past received in this country the attention it has deserved. Matthew Arnold has said that "culture is reading, but reading with a purpose to guide it, and with system . . . is the one essential service now to be rendered to education." This service I take to be eminently the work of the public library, and if we are to carry out efficiently this educational programme, we must begin to deal with the individual while he is of tender years. The benefits to be derived by bringing young people into touch with the public library, and giving them an insight into its resources, are inestimable; and although at the present time the results may not always be encouraging, the future will evidence the value of the work.

One of the first essentials in the success of the juvenile library is adequate accommodation in the library building. The larger libraries should have a juvenile department separate from the adult library, not only for the benefit of the youngsters, but also for the convenience of those readers who in maturer years have forgotten that they too once were children. This department should have its rightful place on an equal footing with the adult library, and should not be relegated to the basement or be entered by a back door. It is most important that the juvenile library should be associated in the child's mind with the general library. The result of this will be that children, having passed the "milk" or probationary period, will naturally take advantage of the more solid fare provided in the general library. The juvenile section should be provided with both lending and reference libraries, and a reading room. In localities where there are no organised school libraries, the lending library would in all probability be the most important of the departments; but where a good system of school libraries is in operation, the lending library would be proportionately the least used. The reading room should contain a plentiful supply of magazines, and there should always be a selection of reference books helpful to the children in their school work, on open shelves. Writing accommodation should also be provided, and ink might be used in cases where the children could be trusted not to exercise their artistic talent on the books, on the walls, or on one another.

Having thus sketched a general idea of the juvenile library, the next step is to consider how best the work may be carried out. In the first place it is necessary that it be organised and directed by a capable management. A Committee is a necessary evil, but in the formation of that body it should be borne in mind that a small Committee will oftentimes accomplish more than a large one. The management of the juvenile department should be in the hands of a special Sub-Committee, composed of four or five ladies and gentlemen. I would include the ladies, because their knowledge of children and their intuition in contrast to the more laboured

reasoning of man, would in all probability be found helpful. The assistant-in-charge must be well-educated, sympathetic, and possessed of a good temper. I am not as a rule an advocate of lady assistants, but the superintendence of the juvenile department seems to require attributes not possessed by the ordinary man.

The rules and regulations should be brief and to the point, and framed in simple language so that the youngest can easily understand them. They may, or may not, be incorporated with the regulations of the other departments of the library; but in any case something similar to the following list of rules should be printed separately, and given to each child on becoming a member.

General.

1. The Juvenile Library and Reading Room are open on Saturday from 2 to 8.30 p.m., and on other week-days from 5 to 8.30 p.m. They will be closed on Christmas Day, Good Friday, and Bank Holidays.
2. All boys and girls living in the town may use the Library and Reading Room.
3. Don't come with dirty face or hands.
4. You must not talk, or bring dogs or other pets into the building.
5. When you do not know what you want, the Librarian will be pleased to help you.

Reading Room and Reference Library.

6. The magazines and papers must not be moved from the tables on which they are placed.
7. Books may be taken from the shelves and read at the tables; but when done with they must be left on the tables.
8. When turning over the leaves of books or magazines, do not wet the finger or thumb, but turn from the top of the page.

Lending Library.

9. Books are lent for reading at home. If you wish to become a member you must fill up a form, giving your name, address, age, and school: this form must be signed by your father (or, if father is dead, your mother).
10. If the form is properly filled up, the Librarian will give you a ticket. This ticket must be given up when a book is taken out.
11. Only those having tickets can choose books from the shelves.
12. You can only take out one book at a time, and this cannot be changed for another on the same day.
13. Books must not be kept longer than a fortnight. A boy or girl keeping a book longer than this time will not be able to take out another till leave is given by the Librarian.
14. Keep the books clean. Do not turn down the leaves or make pencil or other marks upon them. In wet weather be careful to wrap the books up.
15. Boys and girls changing their addresses must give their new address to the Librarian.
16. When there is any illness in the house, the Librarian must be told at once.

Important.

17. Any boy or girl disobeying these rules will not be allowed to use any part of the Library.

I do not set these forth as a model list of rules, but rather to give an idea as to the form on which such a list should be based. You will notice that instead of fines I advocate the suspension of the ticket. This, I think, would be more in the nature of a hardship, as in the majority of cases the fine would be paid by an indulgent parent.

In considering methods of work, a question may arise as to the desirability or advisability of rules 7 and 11. Unless there are special reasons to the contrary, I think children should have direct access to the shelves. In a well-organised library the disadvantages of such a course are few, and are outweighed by the advantages which may briefly be summarised as follows:—

- (1) It arouses a greater interest in the library;
- (2) It aids a more intelligent use of the books, and gives children a greater respect for them;
- (3) The assistant-in-charge is brought into closer contact with the young people than under the barrier system, and much good results therefrom;
- (4) The children learn to find the books under their subjects, this being an education in itself and a preparation for the use of the general library in after years.

Under this system the books must of course be within easy reach of the children.

The juvenile room should be made cheerful and attractive. Suitable pictures or maps should adorn any available wall space. All possible freedom should be allowed in the choice of books; but advice should be given when necessary; and assistants should always be ready and willing to suggest, direct, and in various ways to help those in search of information. It is most necessary that good habits should be cultivated in the children, and perhaps one of the most difficult things to a certain class of child is to see the necessity for using soap and water. To have the necessary lavatory accommodation in a corner of the room is preferable to dispatching the youngsters home to wash their faces and hands, for in five cases out of six they will decide that the advantages of the library do not compensate for this its great disadvantage, and will not return. The work will be greatly aided by enlisting the sympathy and support of parents and school teachers. This may be done by sending out circulars giving information about the children's libraries, and setting forth the advantages to be gained from the love of sound reading. This method has been adopted in some places, with good results. Parents and teachers might also be invited to visit the library in order that they may get a good idea of the work which is being done. An excellent plan which originated in the United States, is that of "talks" to elder scholars in the library, explaining the use of the classification, the catalogue, and the library generally. Where the education and the library committees are working hand in hand, there should be no difficulty in arranging such a class as a part of the school routine. With regard to charging systems and catalogues I have little to say. The card-charging system will, I think, generally be found the most convenient. The catalogue should, like the rules, be compiled with a view to simplicity.

In the selection of books, children of all ages must be catered for; and the collection must in every way be representative. A good selection of both lending and reference books should be provided. The standard books should be duplicated largely, except in cases where there is an efficient system of school libraries. Don't provide "cribs": the scholars will be already well provided. Suggestions should be received from the children, and from those interested in the young.

A most useful feature of juvenile work is that of lectures or talks on interesting subjects, showing the value or contents of books. I prefer the term "talk" because it is less formal than lecture. These "talks" have been held here at Stoke Newington and at other places, and have been productive of great benefit. Admission should be by tickets, which could be distributed through the head teachers of the various schools in the district. I have little doubt but what the demand would exceed the supply, and the distribution must be made proportionately. Care should be exercised in the choice of subjects, and, what is perhaps of equal importance, in the titles of the subjects chosen. As an illustration take two most forbidding titles: "The Use of Bibliographical Aids," and "The Influence of Railway Traction on Commerce." These might well be translated: "Some books and what they tell us," and "The Railway Engine and what it has done for us." A slight difficulty may be experienced in obtaining suitable "talkers." Professor Dryasdust may be very learned, but don't invite him to talk to children. Get someone who knows his subject thoroughly well, but who at the same time is bright and cheerful, and has the power of holding the attention of his young audience. Remember that no audience is so critical as a juvenile one. Illustrate all talks, if possible, with lantern slides. Reading lists on the subjects of the talks should be exhibited in every school in the district, and be given to the children attending the talks. Care should be taken lest in the desire to make this phase of juvenile work interesting and attractive, the main purpose be forgotten. It should be borne in mind that the object of the talks is to whet the child's palate with a desire for that knowledge which comes from the reading of good books, and to direct him to the place where that literature is stored—the public library.

There is no doubt but that we are lamentably behind our American colleagues in catering for the young. Librarianship in the United States has been so specialised in the juvenile department as to become quite a fine art. As an instance of this, the following extract which is taken from the report of an important American library, may serve as illustration:

"The children come direct from school to prepare lessons. . . . Little folks who can't read like to come in to look at pictures; but quite often they will fall asleep while looking at a picture upside down. . . . They are always willing to help in anything; run errands, arrange books and chairs, and keep the floor quite nice and clean. . . . Still there are others whom it is impossible to get interested in anything, but they delight to scream at the doors and windows. . . . The librarian is kept supplied with fruit, and there are always gifts ranging from marbles to Lowney's chocolates. . . . The children expect the librarian to show them the latest stitches in embroidery, to help in translating their Latin, and to decide for them which was greater in his time, George Washington or Abraham Lincoln. It is even nothing unusual to treat burns and cuts."

Here we have immense possibilities; but it is to be feared that even the most progressive librarians of this country would hold back from such a delightful prospect. Seriously, however, we have much to learn from the United States with regard to the juvenile library movement, and a glance at American methods should stimulate us to increased effort. Nearly every public library in the United States has its children's room, and in many this room is a magnificent apartment. The open shelf system, or, as some would describe it, that of letting the children loose among the books, seems general. Mr. Jast who recently visited the United States as representative of the Library Association at the International Library Congress held at St. Louis, says: "Whatever the system obtaining in the main library the books in the children's room are always on open shelves. Tables are provided with a selection of suitable magazines, and the room

is usually gay with pictures, bulletins, and flowers." The bulletins mentioned "are a prominent feature of the work in many places. They consist in a general way of boards on which are written or posted lists of books on some topic of interest, or a poem, together with pictures relating to the subject of the bulletin." The story hour finds a place in many of the juvenile libraries. The stories are generally given once a week, and are frequently taken from legends or myths. Lectures to children form an important part of the work. At Brookline the experiment of the teacher bringing his class to the library to study the material bearing on the lesson has been tried. The reluctance of teachers to spare time for this purpose was found to be a drawback; but it resulted in individual pupils being sent to look up matter connected with their studies. I have already mentioned a scheme of visits to the adult library to enable elder scholars to learn the use of the classification, etc. This has recently been inaugurated at Newark, and should serve to give the young people a good idea of the library and its resources. The assistants-in-charge of the children's libraries in America are mostly women, the majority being specially trained for the work.

There is one thought that always suggests itself in comparing British with American methods, and that is: the libraries of the United States have much larger incomes than those of the United Kingdom. Under these circumstances it cannot be expected that we can do all that America has done and is doing for the children; but let this not be a peg on which to hang idle excuses, for there is much we can do. Remember that the children of to-day will be the ratepayers of to-morrow. Educate the children to understand the value of the public library, and in the years to come they will not begrudge an adequate rate.

In conclusion it is well to consider the relationship that the juvenile department bears to the school and to the general library. As I have endeavoured to show, it acts as a supplement, and not as a rival, to the school library. It is the training school for the general library. Having for its object the instruction of the child, this branch of our work must necessarily have the sympathy and support of those engaged in the education of the young. It therefore follows that the juvenile library is the connecting link between the Public Library and the School, thus combining the two great educational agencies which must be for the public good.

Discussion.

Mr. S. A. Hatcher, while agreeing that special provision should be made for children, thought they often caused annoyance to adult readers, and for this reason advocated a separate entrance where possible. He objected to the practice of charging fines for the detention of books, because the parents generally had to pay them. To stop the ticket for a time would have the desired effect in securing the prompt return of books.

Mr. Hogg thought that Mr. Stewart's ideas were more suitable for the millennium, and that Mr. Coutts' paper was the more practical of the two. He questioned whether it was desirable to have school libraries and at the same time provide juvenile departments at the public library. It seemed to him that the work was clashing, and a child might obtain two tickets. It would be more useful if the educational authorities would hand over to the public libraries the books in their possession, and send the children to them for books. In Battersea no guarantee was required, but he thought it was desirable to have a guarantee. As to the question of fines, he thought some system of fines necessary in order to teach the children to be more careful in seeing that their books were kept free from damage and promptly returned.

Mr. J. D. Young said the type of boy he preferred was one of the sort depicted in Ian Maclaren's "Young Barbarians." He said it seemed to be the feeling that because the rate was limited in many places where children's libraries were provided, books should only be sent to rate supported schools. This, he thought, was most unjust, as the children attending non-rate supported schools had as much right to the books as the others.

Mr. Thorne could not agree with Mr. Stewart's suggestion that the public library should provide the schools with books. He was emphatically of the opinion that the children should be sent to the public libraries. In Poplar the plan adopted was to send forms to the schoolmasters, who were asked to recommend children, and in this way over 50 schools were reached. He did not think it would be possible to send collections of books to 50 schools without seriously denuding the library. As to open access and classified lists, he could only say that they would not do in Poplar. It would not be safe to trust the children among the books if only from the cleanliness point of view. Adult readers were not interfered with at Poplar, as no children's books were issued after 7 o'clock.

Mr. White thought it a mistake to keep the children's department open until 8.30, as children were thus kept out too late. He strongly advocated open access, but if the library was classified the classification should only be carried out to one decimal point, otherwise there was difficulty in keeping books in their proper order.

Mr. Sayers said the two papers taken together formed a counsel of perfection. There must be both school libraries and juvenile departments at the public libraries. There was no reason why a child should not have two books. At Croydon it was found quite possible to send books to 50 schools. At Cardiff they had both school libraries and magnificent accommodation at the public library for children. In an article on work for children in American Libraries which appeared in the September "Library Assistant," he had remarked that the library with the largest system of school libraries in this country had the absurd age-limit of sixteen. He was referring to Cardiff, and had spoken without sufficient knowledge. He had since learned that Cardiff had, at one time, ten as the age limit, but now even that had been abolished, and any child in the public schools might borrow books on the simple recommendation of the head-teacher. He was glad to correct his error, and to notice that Cardiff had now extended her school libraries to the non-provided schools of the city. It was not desirable to have a separate entrance for the juvenile or to separate this department in any way. Juvenile work should be co-ordinated with the general work of the library. He objected to fining children. If a child had any love for reading, the greatest hardship to him would be the suspension of his ticket, and therefore this was sufficient punishment.

Mr. Baxter related his experience with regard to lectures or talks to children at Stoke Newington. He said it was extremely difficult to find anyone qualified to undertake this work, and to select suitable subjects. Either the children themselves should be asked to suggest subjects, or else the teacher or some other person who thoroughly understood the child mind.

Mr. Preece explained some of the methods adopted at Stoke Newington. Speaking on the juvenile paper, he emphasised the importance of courtesy and willingness to help on the part of assistants. He favoured the provision of a juvenile department at the library instead of at the schools as the work was thus centralised. He was also in favour of restricting the use of the children's room to such as were recommended by the teachers. At Stoke Newington there was at first no restriction, with the result that there was much disorder and overcrowding. Admis-

sion was now restricted to those possessing tickets issued by the teachers, and the condition of things had much improved. This rule, however, was not too strictly enforced so long as those using the room were well-behaved.

Mr. Harris in moving a vote of thanks to the readers of the papers said they had provoked one of the best discussions the Association had ever had. He advocated both school libraries and juvenile departments at the public libraries. At Hornsey they had both, but the juvenile readers at the library were not debarred from borrowing books from other classes.

Mr. Bursill seconded, and the vote being carried with acclamation Messrs. Bayley, Stewart and Coutts returned thanks, the two latter replying to many of the points raised in the discussion.

On the proposition of Mr. Thorne, seconded by Mr. Sayers, a hearty vote of thanks was accorded Mr. Alderman Eve for his kindness in taking the Chair and for having provided refreshments, and with the vote were coupled the names of Mr. Preece and Mr. Harper.

Mr. Alderman Eve returned thanks, remarking on the very great pleasure it had given him to be present, and the meeting then terminated.

THE COMMITTEE.

A meeting of the Committee was held at the St. Martin's Public Library, W.C., on Wednesday evening, November 22nd, when there were present Mr. W. Geo. Chambers (in the Chair) and Messrs. Bullen, Bursill, Coutts, Green, Harris, Hatcher, Hogg, Poulter, Rees, Rivers, Sayers, Smith, Stephen, Thorne and Roebuck (Hon. Sec.).

It was decided that the special general meeting of the Association to discuss the question of affiliation with the Library Association be arranged to take place in February.

In order to give effect to the resolution of the annual meeting with regard to co-opting junior members, it was resolved that Messrs. A. Hatcher (West Ham), Henley (Poplar), Loney (Stepney) and Twort (Croydon) be invited to serve on the Committee.

NOTES AND COMMENTS.

The meeting at Stoke Newington was a distinct success, and the large attendance was most encouraging. If the enthusiasm already manifested this Session can only be maintained, we may look forward to great things. And we believe it will be maintained. Signs are not wanting that a revival has set in. A most hopeful feeling has pervaded the two meetings already held, and last month in these pages we had the pleasant experience of chronicling the election of some thirty new members. Such a wholesale addition to our ranks has not taken place for some time, and goes to prove that assistants are realising more and more the advantages offered them by membership of the Association. We hope there may be many others who will decide to enrol themselves this Session.

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What was the matter with the juniors at Stoke Newington? They did not rise to the occasion at all, so far as the discussion was concerned, notwithstanding the fact that some very interesting points were raised by Mr. Bayley in his excellent paper. This feature should receive all the support possible from juniors, inasmuch as it has been introduced for their benefit. By the way, the term *junior* paper is only used to denote that the paper

is specially intended for the younger members of the Association, and we sincerely hope they will not resent the use of the term, or consider it *infra dig* to associate themselves with this part of the proceedings.

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The question of employing female assistants in public libraries is still a knotty one, and opinion on the matter is by no means unanimous, even among librarians. Quite a battle has been raging in the Islington Borough Council over the proposal of the Libraries Committee to throw open certain positions in their libraries to women. The Committee's recommendations as to the composition of the staff were as follows:—

Central Library.—Chief librarian (male), £300, increasing by annual increments of £50 to a maximum salary of £400 per annum; deputy-librarian (male), £175, £113, £225; chief assistant (male), £104, £13, £156; five junior assistants (female), £32 10s., £4 17s. 6d., £52; one porter (male), £78; one book repairer (female), £60; two cleaners (female), £32.

Branch Libraries.—Four librarians (male), £156, rising by annual increments of £13 to a maximum salary of £208 per annum; four senior assistants (female), £52, £6 10s., £78; 16 junior assistants (female), £32 10s., £4 17s. 6d., £52; four cleaners (female), £32.

(a) That the staff of the public libraries be composed and distributed as shown in the above statement. (b) That the scale of salaries set forth in the said statement be approved and adopted. (c) That advertisements be issued for one branch librarian, one chief assistant, and one junior assistant, and that it be referred to the Public Libraries Committee to make the appointments at the salaries in the scale.

* * * * *

These recommendations met with much opposition, the principal argument of those who favoured female labour being that it was cheaper, and that a saving of some £260 per year would be effected in Islington. This argument was met by one worthy councillor with the retort "Chinese labour"! Eventually the report was referred back.

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The views of our readers on this question of female assistants would be interesting, and members are reminded that our Correspondence page is always open for the discussion of questions such as this.

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Upon Mr. Edward M. Borrajo, senior sub-librarian of the Guildhall Library, the King of Spain has conferred the Commandership of the Royal Order of Alfonso XII. Mr. Borrajo was deputed by the Corporation to visit Madrid in connection with the exhibition of Spanish art held at the Guildhall in 1901, and was officially attached to the same body to the Deputation of the Municipality of Madrid which came to London during the recent visit of King Alfonso to this country.

APPOINTMENTS.

*AYTON, Mr. J. G., District Librarian, Cubitt Town, Poplar, to be a District Librarian, Glasgow.

CANNONS, Mr. H. G. T., Acting Librarian (formerly Sub-Librarian), Finsbury Public Libraries, to be Chief Librarian, the appointment to date from March 25th, 1905.

HEDDEN, Mr. C. W., Central Reference Library, Cardiff, to be a District Librarian, Glasgow.

*YOUNG, Mr. W. B., Sub-Librarian, Leyton, to be first Librarian of the Erith Public Library.

* Members of the L.A.A.

NEW MEMBERS.

Senior: Mr. M. J. Wrigley, Stockport.

Junior: Mr. H. Nicoll, Greenock.

CORRESPONDENCE.

To the Editor of the "Library Assistant."

Dear Sir,—In the "Library Assistant" for September a statement occurs in the article "Things we may expect" that "the town with the largest system of school libraries in the country has the absurd age limit of 16 years in the Public Library." If this reference is to Cardiff it is quite incorrect, as there has been no age limit at the Cardiff Public Library for several years, and certainly for 21 years no age limit above 10. I trust you will see your way to insert this correction.

JOHN BALLINGER.

Cardiff Public Libraries.

APPOINTMENTS VACANT.

Notice to Library Authorities.—We shall be pleased to publish under this heading, free of charge, particulars of vacancies, if full details are sent to the Editor not later than the 26th of each month.

ADDRESSES.

Chairman and Hon. Treasurer—Mr. W. Geo. Chambers, Public Library, Plumstead (Telephone—45 Woolwich).

Hon. Secretary—Mr. Geo. E. Roebuck, St. George's Library, 236, Cable Street, E.

Hon. Secretary, Education Sub-Committee—Mr. W. C. Berwick Sayers, Public Library, Croydon (Telephone—394 Croydon).

Hon. Librarian—Mr. A. H. Carter, Public Library, St. Martin's Lane, W.C.

Hon. Editor—Mr. Hugh Smith, Bishopsgate Institute, E.C., to whom matter for the January number should be sent not later than December 15th.